

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Final Office Action dated February 18, 2004 and the telephone interview courteously granted by the Examiner on April 13, 2004. Claims 1 and 38 have been amended. Claims 12 and 43 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New Claims 47 to 60 have been added. No new matter has been added by any of the amendments made herein. A Request for Continued Examination is submitted herewith. A check in the amount of \$770 is submitted to cover the cost of the RCE. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for any insufficiency or to credit any overpayment.

Claims 1, 3 to 12 and 38 to 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,813,914 to McKay et al. ("*McKay*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,335,605 to Drabczyk ("*Drabczyk*"). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. Nevertheless, Applicants have amended the claims to clarify the claims and place the claims in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a gaming device including a component cabinet including a first side wall, an opposing second side wall and a first rear wall connected to the first and second side walls. The gaming device includes a display cabinet removably connected to the component cabinet, the display cabinet including a third side wall, an opposing fourth side wall and a second rear wall connected to the third and fourth side walls. The gaming device also includes a display device mounted in the display cabinet and operable with a processor and at least one player input device to enable a player to play a game upon a wager by the player. The gaming device includes at least two side panels, where a first side panel is removably connected to the first side wall and the third side wall and a second side panel is removably connected to the second side wall and the fourth side wall. The gaming device includes securing means for securing the first side panel to the first side wall and the third side wall from inside of the component cabinet and the display cabinet respectively and for securing the second side panel to the second side wall and the fourth side wall from inside of the component cabinet and the display cabinet respectively, where the securing means can only be unsecured from the side panels and the side walls from inside of the component

cabinet and the display cabinet. Each side panel includes a substrate and a decorative layer connected to the substrate. The gaming device also includes a lockable door movably connected to the component cabinet which is movable to access the inside of the component cabinet and the display cabinet.

Applicants respectfully submit that there is no motivation or teaching to combine *McKay* and *Drabczyk*. *McKay* is directed to a gaming machine having a slant top cabinet including a top cabinet assembly having a display panel on a surface facing potential players. (see the Abstract). The slot machine includes a door 8, which provides limited access to the electronics 74. The slot machine also includes slant top panel 26 which pivots to open and allow a technician to access the monitor 28 and the decision-making buttons 32 and box 33. (Col. 5, lines 5 to 10). *McKay* describes that the display glass 26 is removable for changeover. (Col. 2, lines 10 to 16). However, *McKay* does not disclose, teach or suggest removable side panels such as side panels 4 and 52. Also, *McKay* does not disclose, teach or suggest securing means which secure the side panels to the gaming machine from the inside of the gaming machine which can only be unsecured from the inside of the gaming machine. In addition, *McKay* does not disclose, teach or suggest side panels having a substrate with a decorative layer as stated by the Patent Office in the Office Action (see page 3 of the Office Action). The Patent Office therefore uses *Drabczyk* to remedy the deficiencies of *McKay*.

Applicants respectfully submit that a person of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to attach the decorative furniture panels described by *Drabczyk* to the side panels 4 and 52 of *McKay* to achieve the removable side panels and securing means of the claimed invention where *McKay* does not disclose, teach or suggest that such side panels are removable or meant to be removable after assembly of the slot machine. *McKay* also does not disclose, teach or suggest that side panels 4 and 52 are decorative or include any kind of decorative feature. Accordingly, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine *McKay* with *Drabczyk* where there is not teaching or suggestion in *McKay* that side panels 4 and 52 are removable or that these side panels include or could include decorative features.

Even if *McKay* were combined with *Drabczyk*, the combination does not disclose, teach or suggest the elements of amended Claim 1. Specifically, the Patent Office states that the side panels 4 and 52 are removably connected to the opposite sides of the component cabinet and the display cabinet in *McKay*. The side panels 4, however, include feet 6 which support the slot machine (Col. 4, lines 39 to 44). Therefore, if side panels 4 and 52 are removed from the gaming machine, the gaming machine would not be supported by feet 6 thereby making the replacement of the side panels 4 and 52 very difficult. Thus, *McKay* teaches against removing the side panels 4 of the gaming machine because doing so would cause the gaming machine to not be supported and difficult to work with.

Additionally, *McKay* is concerned with security of the gaming machine and making access to the interior of the gaming machine less likely as described by the following statement in *McKay*:

A further object of the present invention is to provide a device as characterized above which makes unauthorized access to various areas of the cabinet less likely and more difficult. (Col. 2, lines 62 to 65).

Thus, *McKay* does not disclose, teach or suggest that side panels 4 and 52 are removable because having such side panels would make the gaming machine less secure and enable unauthorized persons to have additional access means to the interior of the gaming machine. *McKay* therefore teaches against removing the side panels 4 and 52 from the gaming machine.

Accordingly, *McKay* does not disclose, teach or suggest a gaming device including at least two side panels, where a first side panel is removably connected to a first side wall and a third side wall of a component cabinet and display cabinet, respectively, and a second side panel is removably connected to a second side wall and a fourth side wall of the component cabinet and the display cabinet, respectively. *McKay* also does not disclose, teach or suggest securing means for securing the first side panel to the first side wall and the third side wall from inside of the component cabinet and the display cabinet, respectively, and for securing the second side panel to

the second side wall and the fourth side wall from inside of the component cabinet and the display cabinet respectively, where the securing means can only be unsecured from the side panels and the side walls from inside of the component cabinet and the display cabinet.

For at least these reasons, the combination of *McKay* and *Drabczyk* does not disclose, teach or suggest the elements of amended Claim 1. Therefore, amended Claim 1 and Claims 3 to 11 and new Claims 47 to 53, which depend from amended Claim 1, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *McKay* and *Drabczyk* and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 38 is directed to a gaming device including a component cabinet including opposing walls and a rear wall connected together. The gaming device also includes a plurality of differently sized display cabinets adapted to be removably connected to the component cabinet and adapted to be used with a plurality of differently sized display devices where each of the display cabinets include opposing walls and a rear wall connected together. At least one of the display devices is operable with a processor and at least one player input device to enable a player to play at least one game upon a wager by the player. The gaming device includes a plurality of side panels, where at least one first side panel is removably connected to the first side wall and the third side wall of the component cabinet and at least one of the display cabinets and at least one second side panel is removably connected to the second side wall and the fourth side wall of the component cabinet and the at least one display cabinet. The gaming device includes securing means for securing the first side panel to the first side wall and the third side wall from inside of the component cabinet and the at least one display cabinet and for securing the second side panel to the second side wall and the fourth side wall from inside of the component cabinet and the at least one display cabinet. The securing members can only be unsecured from the side panels and the side walls from inside of the component cabinet and the at least one display cabinet. Each side panel includes a substrate and a decorative layer connected to the substrate. The gaming device includes a lockable door movably connected to the

component cabinet where the door is movable to access the inside of the component cabinet and the display cabinet.

Amended Claim 38 includes similar elements to amended Claim 1. Therefore, for the reasons provided above with respect to amended Claim 1, the combination of *McKay* and *Drabczyk* does not disclose, teach or suggest the elements of amended Claim 38. Accordingly, amended Claim 38 and Claims 39 to 42, 44 to 46 and new Claims 54 to 60, which depend from amended Claim 38, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *McKay* and *Drabczyk* and are in condition for allowance.

Additionally, the claimed invention facilitates the manufacture of slot machines by allowing for increased standardization of components along with the increased customization of the slot machines to incorporate different game themes. For example, to increase the size of the display device of a gaming device or slot machine according to the claimed invention, the existing display cabinet of the gaming device is removed from the gaming device and is replaced with a larger display cabinet. Next, larger side panels are connected to the side walls of the component cabinet and the new larger display cabinet to complete the modification of the slot machine. Thus, the entire gaming device does not have to be removed and/or replaced to accommodate the larger display device. Accordingly, the standardized components of the present gaming device such as the display cabinet, the component cabinet and the side panels enable gaming device manufacturers to decrease the lead time associated with manufacturing gaming devices by enabling the manufacturers to product different sized components to make different sizes of gaming devices without having to custom manufacture each gaming device. As a result, the claimed gaming device decreases the manufacturing time to produce gaming devices, which increases the efficiency and rate of production of gaming devices, while providing flexibility to gaming establishment operators to modify existing gaming devices.

Moreover, the claimed invention also enables gaming establishment operators to easily retrofit or change the game or game theme of a gaming device easily and efficiently. Certain gaming devices are retrofitted to change the game or game theme

associated with the gaming devices. In the gaming industry, slot machines or gaming devices generate substantial revenue for gaming establishment operators. Certain gaming devices that have lesser earnings are removed from a gaming establishment and are converted to another game theme that produces higher earnings. Typically, the conversion of a slot machine or gaming device includes changing the glass and/or the reel strips associated with the slot machine. Also, software and hardware changes or upgrades are made to incorporate the new game into the slot machine. The slot machines generally do not include decorative side panels or side walls because having such side walls requires more time and money to convert the slot machines to a different game theme. Also, it is not desirable to have to remove the slot machine from the floor to convert such side panels.

Accordingly, conventional slot machines are sold with little or no decoration or ornamentation on the sides or side panels of the slot machines. By having little or no decoration on the side panels, the number of displays on the slot machine that need to be changed or converted to another game theme is minimized. This enables gaming establishment operators to convert the gaming devices or slot machines to another game theme more efficiently by not having to convert the side panels and/or not having to remove the slot machines from the floor to convert the side panels. However, it is desirable to provide as much decoration or visually attracting images on the slot machines as possible to attract more players to the slot machine. Therefore, a slot machine having decorative sides walls or side panels as in the claimed invention is desirable to attract more players to the slot machines.

Moreover, another important issue facing gaming establishment operators is the security of the slot machines. Slot machines generate significant revenue and therefore at certain times the slot machines have a substantial amount of money contained inside the slot machine. This makes accessing the interior of a slot machine desirable to criminals. Minimizing access to the interior of slot machines by unauthorized persons is very important. Slot machines generally do not include removable panels such as removable side panels because this would give unauthorized people access to the

interior of the slot machines from the exterior of the machines. Thus, a slot machine having minimal access points is highly desirable.

As described above, the claimed invention is directed to a slot machine or gaming device that has removable decorative side panels which enable a gaming establishment operator to easily and quickly change the side panels to convert the slot machine to a new game without sacrificing the security of the slot machine. The removable side panels also minimize the need to remove the bulky slot machines from their location on a gaming establishment floor to convert the slot machines which also minimizes the disruption to other players.

The decorative side panels of the claimed invention are removably connected to the slot machine by connecting the side panels to the sidewalls of the component cabinet and the display cabinet from the interior or inside of the component cabinet and the display cabinet using a suitable attachment method or device such as a number of screws or bolts. By connecting the side panels from the inside of the component cabinet and the display cabinet, the side panels are securely attached to the sidewalls of the component cabinet and the display cabinet while preventing unauthorized persons from having additional access to the interior of the slot machine. Thus, the claimed invention enables gaming establishment operators to quickly and easily remove and replace the side panels of slot machines to convert a slot machine from one game to another game while preventing unauthorized persons from gaining additional access to the inside of the slot machine.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and, in the absence of more pertinent art, such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY: 

Christopher S. Hermanson

Reg. No. 48,244

P.O. Box 1135

Chicago, Illinois 60690-1135

Phone: (312) 807-4225

Dated: May 17, 2004